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Investigators Have Suspects In Seal Mutilations

Seal Parts May Have Been Sold As Aphrodisiacs

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PORTSMOUTH, N.H. -- Authorities said Friday they now think they know who is responsible for mutilating seals found along the Seacoast in the last few months, but they said the investigation is far from over.

Video

Larger Reward Offered In Seal Deaths

Two more seals were recently found dead with some of their body parts removed, and authorities said they're looking into a third suspicious death discovered last week. Investigators said that they have two prime suspects in the case, both from New Hampshire.

"That type of activity is violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972," U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono said.

"It's something we take seriously in New Hampshire."

Investigators would not specify who they believe are responsible for the seal deaths. The most recent seal was found in Kittery, Maine.

"The only thing I'll tell you is that it was discovered by a veterinarian who obviously knew what they were looking at and that the seal had been skinned," said Chris Shoppmeyer, of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

It's believed the seals are being killed to supply a black market that sells their genitalia and whiskers for use as aphrodisiacs, which can be sold for hundreds of dollars an ounce

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"The public has been very helpful in this, and we've received over 100 calls that have come in," Colantuono said.

To help track down the suspects, the reward for information has been boosted to nearly \$8,000.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at 436-3186 ext. 224.

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